

## Recognitions at the December 2006 State Board of Education Meeting

Dubbed the “Oscars of Teaching” by *Teacher Magazine*, the Milken National Educator Awards were created in 1985 to reward, retain, and attract top professionals to the nation’s schools. A total of 100 unsuspecting educators across the country were surprised this fall with the news of their \$25,000 awards during emotional, school-wide assemblies.



- **Milken Award Winner Regina Urueta**

Two South Carolina educators who are new members of the elite group of Milken Award winners were honored at the State Board meeting in December 2006.

In this photo, Tigerville Elementary School principal Regina Urueta (right) is congratulated by State Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum. Regina is the youngest person in the Greenville County School District to ever become a principal and has gained a reputation as a “teacher’s principal.” She teaches in the Before School Program at 7:15 a.m. and leads Focused Learning Groups during the day.

Regina is passionate about early childhood education. She often sends letters and e-mails to legislators and business leaders about the importance of the pre-K four-year-old program. She piloted a fitness and nutrition curriculum for students and staff called Zest Quest. Fluent in Spanish, Regina has made a tremendous effort to reach out to the growing Hispanic population.



- **Milken Award Winner LaTonya Durant**

In this photo, LaTonya Durant, a teacher at St. James-Gaillard Elementary School in Orangeburg Consolidated School District Three, is congratulated by State Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum accompanied by State Board member Patsy Pye (far left) and Orangeburg Three superintendent Dr. David Longshore.

LaTonya works with members of the staff in analyzing test scores to chart each student’s areas of academic strength and weakness. She creates academic assistance plans with parents while providing hours of extra student assistance and tutoring before school, during her planning time, lunch period, and after school.

LaTonya is a member of the District’s ELITE and ACE teacher initiatives. She is called upon to share school leadership responsibilities, and to facilitate curriculum development, strategic planning, and staff development. She is a member of the School Improvement Council and the Parent/Teacher

Organization, and is a lifelong resident of the community in which she works.

Our Milken recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of top educators who have access to a variety of expert resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Next spring, recipients from around the country and their spouses, as well as many former recipients, will travel to Los Angeles to attend the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference—three days of workshops, discussion sessions, and presentations by nationally recognized scholars and practitioners in the field of education. The conference will culminate in a gala evening ceremony at which the recipients will be honored and presented their cash awards.